



MARCH 2014

Volume 46, Issue 3

Inside this issue:

Unique Crossing	1,7
Right-of-Way	1,6
President's Letter	2
Lafayette Buzz	3
Farm Fest	4
Calendar of Events	5

The Most Unique Crossing on the Oregon Trail

The most outstanding crossing ever made by a wagon train on the Oregon Trail was led by a hearse that contained the body of a dead man. It had a strange hallowed effect on the Indians, for not one shot was fired at the caravan, nor was it harassed in any way and not one life was lost on the long trip. Historian Steward Holbrook in his book "Far Corners" states "Willie Keil's 2,000-mile trek was the most unique crossing in American history. He was dead and in his coffin before the team was harnessed. Yet no flanking rifleman ever awed the enemies of a column of pioneers half so well as Willie Keil and his hearse."

Willie's father was Dr. William Keil, noted leader and founder of the Christian Colonies of Bethel, Missouri

and Aurora, Oregon. The colony of Bethel had outgrown its boundaries, more land was needed and rather than buy high priced land in Missouri, the Doctor decided to start another colony on the West Coast, where he could get free land through the Donation Land Grant in Washington and Oregon. When the advance party returned with a glowing report, his 19-year-old son, Willie, was the most excited person in the colony, his enthusiasm spurred preparation for departure. May 23, 1855 was set for the day when 35 heavy wagons, 250 travelers and a large herd of livestock would leave. But malaria, the dreaded scourge of the frontier, struck—Willie Keil became delirious. He begged his father to let him lead the caravan as he



Dr. William Keil (1812-1877)

promised but on May 19, Willie died. To Dr. Keil a promise was as sacred in death as it was in life.

The doctor ordered a lead-lined casket made, which he filled with alcohol and placed his son's body in it. He then had the coffin strapped to a light wagon. When everything was in order, the Doctor blew a long blast on his silver trumpet and the caravan moved West, led by a light

Continued on Page 7

NOTICE: March Potluck and General Meeting

- Date: March 9, 2014
- Time: 1:30 pm Potluck, 2:00 pm Program
- Program: TBA
- Location: HERITAGE Center, Hwy 18 & Durham Lane, McMinnville

Fight for River Right-of-Way

Our first settlers found the Yamhill River to be a ready-made highway. Boats zigzagged around the obstacles, making their way as far as Lafayette. Loggers floated logs down to Carlton from almost 50 miles above the mouth. The stream afforded a more

reliable means of transportation to downriver markets than any overland road or trail.

The Oregonian reported in 1865: "So much rain falls that it is difficult to keep the roads in repair" The paper went on to say: "Most farmers from the

interior who haul their produce to the Willamette River for the market complain that the roads are in bad condition at the most important season of the year—just when their produce is ready for market."

The popularity of the river as a route of commerce led to

Continued on Page 6

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President's Letter



YCHS Members,

We've seen some extraordinary weather in February, unfortunately causing the cancellation of our February General Meeting. We'll get back to our normal schedule with the next meeting scheduled for March 9th at the Heritage Center. We had also intended to support an Amity/Dayton fundraising event on the 8th at the Stoller Winery with a display of our covered wagon and stage coach. That was also cancelled and will be rescheduled. We hope to provide support for them later.

Otherwise, we had a successful display at the Portland Agricultural Show on January 28th to 30th. It was said that we had the best exhibit there, creating lots of interest. On April 26th and 27th we will have tractors and the covered wagon at the Salem Ag Fest. If you have the opportunity, please visit our display. The Education Committee will be beginning their annual Pioneer Days program on April 28th. This event has been fully subscribed and we anticipate another successful educational opportunity for the grade schoolers in attendance.

At the February Board of Directors meeting we approved the Activities and Events Committee Charter. They are laying out all of our annual events as well as some additional activities, including an Oregon State Birthday Party on February 14th at the Lafayette Poling Church. This event will have passed by the time

you read this. I hope that you had the chance to stop by. Creating updated committee charters has been a slow process, but we are progressing in the development of an improved committee structure. Along with the committees we are applying a more organized budget process for 2014. The Board approved spending on several capital projects for additional work at the Heritage Center and looks forward to a complete capital budget for 2014 soon. While we do not as yet have a response from the Ford Family Foundation regarding our grant request for the Heritage Hall project, the Heritage Center Development and Operations Committee is working on a plan to start work on various aspects of the project. We have currently available funds that can produce significant progress and will be able to define the entire scope of work as soon as we hear from the Ford Family Foundation.

Among approved projects, the lighting of the new signage on the Heritage Center is progressing well. We should see the results soon. The cupola and chimney for the Hutchcroft School is in the planning stage and construction should begin this summer.

The Farm Fest Committee has begun planning for Farm Fest to be held April 12th. This is always a premier event for the YCHS. If you can help with it I'm sure Pam Watts would like to hear from you. Otherwise, set aside the date and come out and join us.

Steve Leonard
YCHS President
Phone: (503) 472-6908
Email: sleonard15@frontier.com
Submitted: February 15, 2014

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Lafayette Buzz...



Historic Poling Church

Happy Birthday Oregon! What a nice event. Many visitors joined us at the museum on Valentine's day to celebrate Oregon's 155th birthday. Tours of both buildings were followed by birthday cake and punch. Many members as well as new friends enjoyed our new exhibits and displays provided by Karen Sitton-Saxberg and her family. Thanks to all who supported this event and if you missed the fun, stop in for a visit.

The Lafayette volunteers were very busy during our January closing. We made updates and improvements to our research department as well as changed exhibits in the Poling Church. Watch for more changes!

Wish List: We could use some



grocery size paper bags.

Weather Alert: Just a reminder that we are closed, along with the schools, during bad weather. Spring is just around the corner...

Jean Sartor, Publications and the Lafayette Ladies



Photo's by Tom Cattrall

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Ursula Doud

Accessions/Restoration

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Gloria Lutz—Heritage Center

Garry Coats—Lafayette

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Marjorie Owens

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Tom Cattrall

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Sawmill:

Don King

Secrets of the Past Tours:

Karen Sitton-Saxberg

Steam Engine:

Vern Yeager

Treasures in the Attic:

Carolyn Meeker



Farm Fest & Plowing Competition

Saturday, April 12, 2014

Yamhill Valley Heritage Center
10 am—4 pm

Largest Gathering of Draft Horses & Mules in Oregon to compete in plowing competition

Rare opportunity to watch 20+ teams of draft horses & mules in a plowing competition, see demonstrations & meet the teamsters.

Shires, Belgians, Percherons, Clydesdales, Haflingers and Mules



Photo courtesy of Michelle Blumenthal

11275 SW Durham Lane, McMinnville, Oregon
(Intersection of Hwy. 18 & Durham Ln.)

- Plowing, Demos and Activities throughout the day
- Plowing Competition Awards 3:30
- Opening Ceremonies & Flag Raising by VFW 10:00
- Sawmill, Blacksmith, Horseshoeing Demonstrations
- "Agriculture in Art" photo and art exhibit by student, amateur & professional artists
- Pioneer Kids' Area with Hands-on Activities & Animals
- Heritage Center Museum Tours & Historical Displays
- Old-Time Music, Food, & More!

**\$5 admission—
Kids 12 & under FREE**

Come back for the harvest & old-time family fun at Harvest Fest August 16 & 17



Oregon Draft Horse Breeders Association

For more information, call 503-434-0490 or go to www.yamhillcountyhistory.org.

MARCH 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					Lafayette Museum Open 10-4	1 Lafayette Museum Open 10-4 Heritage Ctr. Open 10-3
2	3	4	5 Lafayette Museum Open 10-4	6	7 Lafayette Museum Open 10-4	8 Lafayette Museum Open 10-4 Heritage Ctr. Open 10-3
9 DAYLIGHT SAVINGS GENERAL MEETING 1:30 pm	10	11	12 Lafayette Museum Open 10-4 BOARD MEETING 5:30 pm	13	14 Lafayette Museum Open 10-4	15 Lafayette Museum Open 10-4 Heritage Ctr. Open 10-3
16	17 St. Patrick's Day 	18	19 Lafayette Museum Open 10-4	20	21 Lafayette Museum Open 10-4	22 Lafayette Museum Open 10-4 Heritage Ctr. Open 10-3
23	24	25	26 Lafayette Museum Open 10-4	27	28 Lafayette Museum Open 10-4	29 Lafayette Museum Open 10-4 Heritage Ctr. Open 10-3
30	31					

Event Locations

- ◆ March 9, 2014—General Meeting 1:30 pm—Heritage Center
- ◆ March 12, 2014—Board Meeting 5:30 pm—Lafayette Museum

Upcoming Events

- ◆ April 9—Board Meeting
- ◆ April 12—Farm Fest
- ◆ April 13—General Meeting
- ◆ April 26—Salem Ad Fest
- ◆ August 16-17—Harvest Fest
- ◆ December 6-7—Handmade Holiday

Historic Lafayette Museum

605 Market Street
P.O. Box 484
Lafayette, OR 97127

Hours:
Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday 10-4
Or by appointment
503-864-2308

Yamhill Valley Heritage Center

11275 SW Durham Ln.
McMinnville, OR 97128

Hours:
Saturday 10-3
Contact: 503-435-9700

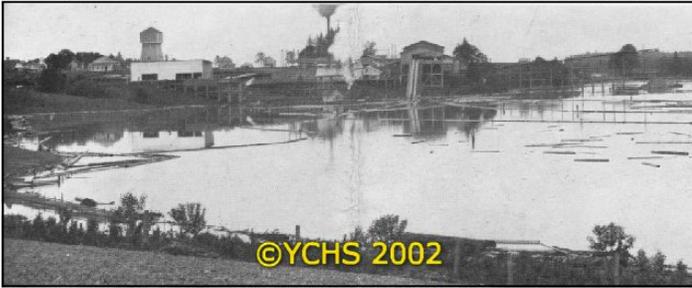
....meanwhile at the Log Cabin

We welcome volunteer Samantha “Sam” Davis, who dedicates her Saturdays to sorting and indexing our “Large Frame” picture collection. Sam is a senior at Yamhill-Carlton High School.

We truly appreciate Sam. Her organizational skills and dedication to the task have allowed us to make great progress in shaping up the “Large Frame” collection.

Ursula Doud

Fight for River Right-of-Way Continued



Carlton Lake (Notice floating logs)

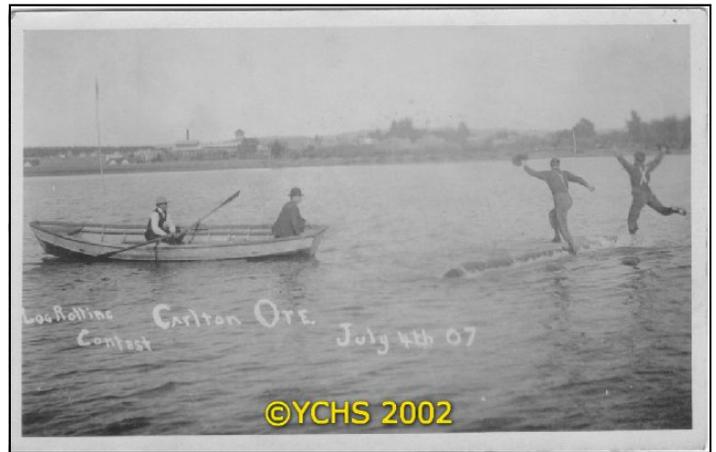
many a conflict. Log-floating was a particular point of contention. W.A. Howe of Carlton Lumber Company would cut logs upstream on the North Yamhill, build a splash dam, dump the logs into the resulting pond, then release the floodgates and let the rush of water carry the logs downstream. Invariably, the floating logs damaged property as they made their way downstream.

The family of D.P. Trullinger, who arrived in Oregon in 1848 and settled near Yamhill, would eventually join the aggrieved in a major way. Around 1870, he built a grist mill west of town on the old Yamhill-Tillamook stage route. There already was a small dam on the river, so he rebuilt it and used the fall of the water to turn his water wheels. In 1900, his son, Carl, decided to make use of water power that was going to waste at night. He obtained a generator so he could produce electricity when the mill wasn't running and sold it to the people in the area.

Then one day, Howe released a load of logs upstream and they washed right over the dam! The destruction was complete. Carl Trullinger sued Howe for damages. However, Judge William Galloway ruled the North Yamhill River was navigable from the splash dams to its mouth. Thus, there was a public highway that could not legally be obstructed. Galloway said the plaintiff had a right to maintain and operate his dam, but had to modify it to allow free use of the river. He said the defendant had a right to maintain and operate his splash dams, but must be responsible for

any damages to structures not interfering with the free flow.

Later that year, Howe was back before a judge. It seems Trullinger had not only left his dam in place, he had raised it six feet. Now, instead of ripping on over it, Howe's logs merely backed up behind it. Howe complained he had six million board feet of timber stuck behind the dam. The judge ordered Trullinger to cut a gate in the middle to let the logs through and fined him \$50 for contempt. Trullinger appealed all the way to the Oregon Supreme Court. In October 1908, the circuit court was reversed: Howe was forever restrained from operating his splash dams.



Carlton Log Rolling Contest 1907

However, he continued (out of spite) floating logs downriver, causing serious damage. The battle went on until both men were forced out of business by larger competitors. The result was surely not to the satisfaction of either party.

Tales From the Past by Jim and Reita Lockett

Winter Wonderland at the Historical Society



Photos by Tom Cattrall



Preserving our Past, Enriching our Future

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97128

Membership Categories

NEW MEMBERSHIP RENEWING MEMBERSHIP

Members receive The West Side newsletter (10 issues per year), free admission to the Lafayette Museum and Library, access to genealogical and historical files, access to the Yamhill Valley Heritage Center, monthly potluck and program for members, invitations to special programs and events, and 10% off photo orders and gift shop purchases.

Membership runs from July 1 to June 30 of each year.

- Senior/Student/Educator \$15 Family (Basic) \$30 Community Builder \$250+
- Senior Family (65+) \$25 Friend \$55 Community Benefactor \$500+
- Individual \$20 Supporter \$125+

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

I would prefer to receive the YCHS newsletter via: Email Postal Mail

- I would like to volunteer to help with activities of the YCHS. Please contact me.
- Please click here* if you do not wish to have your name and contact information released to the Yamhill County Cultural Coalition and/or for the purpose of obtaining grant funding. Member information will never be sold or released for any other purpose unless written consent is provided by the member.

Please make checks payable to YCHS and return with this printed form to:
YCHS, P.O. Box 484, Lafayette, OR 97127

Questions? Call Membership Coordinator Carlene Kadell (503) 474-0480 or email: amity1956@yahoo.com

YCHS Membership Application